

REMARKS

Claim 1 was rejected over the combination of Selig, Schadow, and Kono. It is contended the Schadow teaches “a user operable element having non-monotonic characteristics,” citing column 1, lines 23-35. The cited lines are set forth below and it is respectfully submitted that they do not teach anything related to a non-monotonic response, much less a non-linear response, and, in point of fact, the cited material is basically indecipherable:

Many constructions have been proposed for damping the mechanical switching noises; the simplest construction involving the use of rubber-like abutments for the push button plungers flicked or snapped back by spring force, is usually unsuitable owing to the large tolerances resulting as regards the terminal position of the push buttons, for in the case of varying spring forces in accordance with the number of switching operations carried out on a specific push button a soft abutment is compressed to a greater or lesser extent. If, on the other hand, the spring forces are made equal, the damping action is reduced.

It is not clear what the Examiner believes teaches a non-linear force, much less what any of the above material actually means. It is apparently translated from German and is very unclear. It does indicate that there are varying spring forces, but those spring forces vary “in accordance with the number of switching operations carried out.” Thus, it would seem like the spring force simply varies over time. A non-monotonic force is a function where the dependent variable (force) does not always increase or decrease as the value of the independent variable (displacement) increases or decreases. Thus, even if somehow Schadow teaches a non-linear force, which is not conceded, this does not amount to a non-monotonic function.

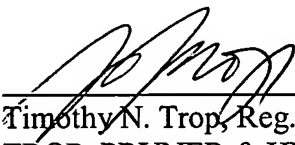
Moreover, it does not even appear that there is anything which can reasonably be relied on as teaching a non-linear force. Apparently, as best can be understood, Schadow suggests that the force may change over time, but this is non-linear over time, not non-linear with displacement.

Therefore, reconsideration is respectfully requested.

On a similar analysis, the other claims patentably distinguish over the art of record.

Respectfully submitted,

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